

Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
www.planning.ri.gov



Work on the Statewide Planning Program's website this quarter included:

- posting of Transportation Improvement Plan Amendments.
- posting of the CEDS Annual Report
- posting of the Intergovernmental Review project listings.
- posting of State Planning Council, Technical Committee, Rivers Council, Growth Planning Council, and Transportation Advisory Committee's Calendar and Agendas.
- posting of monthly newsletter.
- posting of quarterly report.

For information on the Statewide Planning Program's website contact Kim A. Gelfuso at (401) 222-5764, kimgo@lori.state.ri.us

GRAPHICS

Support was provided to the Workers Compensation section of DOA. Support was also provided to Rhode Island Council on the Arts Atrium Gallery.

STAFF NEWS

Mansuet (Manny) Giusti, Supervising Draftsperson with Statewide Planning Program retired on August 6, 2004, with 40 years in State Government all of which were with the Statewide Planning Program.

Alfred Freeman Jr. Senior Draftsperson with the Statewide Planning Program retired on September 3, 2004 with 34 years in State Government.

Joyce Karger, Principal Planner with the Economic Development Section, attained 25 years in State Government on July 21, 2004.

Congratulations!

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program

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Quarterly Progress Report

TRANSPORTATION 2025 - PLAN UPDATE

Transportation 2025 was approved by the TAC on July 22, following public hearings. It was subsequently approved by the Technical Committee on August 6 and the State Planning Council on August 12 along with the Air Quality Conformity Analysis. In addition, two State Guide Plan Elements were repealed: Element 691 – *Transportation Element of the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality* (1982) and *Element 620 – Transportation System Management Plan* (1977). *Transportation 2025* was submitted to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, and is posted at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/transportation/cover.pdf>.

The adoption of *Transportation 2025* concludes a year-long effort by the transportation staff and satisfies federal requirements to maintain funding eligibility.

The Plan is used for the following purposes:

- It sets state policy, to guide public and private decisions involving transportation.
- As a State Guide Plan element, it is a basis for determining consistency of local comprehensive plans and other plans, programs, and projects with state policies.
- It provides a long-range framework for advancing projects in two-year Transportation Improvement Programs.

- It includes the State's Congestion Management Plan (required for ozone non-attainment areas).
- It is a requirement for federal transportation funding.

This major update of the plan includes new elements such as the Congestion Management Plan and a discussion of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness as they relate to the transportation system. As directed in the previous plan (2001), performance measures have also been established to monitor progress towards objectives. This update was based upon the following inputs: a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) representing a variety of transportation interests; six focus groups including Congestion and ITS, Environment and Land Use, Freight and Northeast Corridor, Homeland Security, Safety, Transit and Urban Transportation; an intensive travel corridor visioning process conducted by the Statewide Planning Program in 2003; a series of eight Walkable Community Workshops; Results from the 2000 Census, and Census Transportation Planning Package; updated congestion projections through the statewide travel demand model based on updated population and employment projections; a survey administered by mail and website to determine travel behavior and public opinion on transportation issues; Coordination with the

update of the *State Land Use Plan*, simultaneously being undertaken by Statewide Planning; an assessment of the conformity of the plan's recommendations with the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality (SIP).

To demonstrate fiscal constraint (as required by the federal funding agencies), level funding was generally assumed throughout the planning period in highway and transit programs. The plan discusses funding shortages in coming years based on normal projected inflationary increases in operating costs without corresponding increases in the state gas tax. The state continues to issue bonds for \$60 million every two years to match federal dollars, a practice that is not sustainable and that this plan recommends be discontinued in favor of a "pay-as-you-go" system. To achieve this would require a new source of funds to cover RIDOT's debt service. Additionally, the current level of transit service provided by RIPTA cannot be sustained without increased funding. It is widely accepted that the transportation needs in Rhode Island far outweigh the resources that are expected to be available from current resources.

The plan is organized around fourteen broad goals, all under the umbrella of a vision statement.

VISION STATEMENT

Our common vision recognizes transportation as a core function that threads through other elements of society. Transportation connects the state with the global and regional economies, the home with the workplace, the individual with the community, and all of us with one another. It must equitably benefit all communities, and must be reconciled with quality of life issues as vital as the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the

preservation of our natural and historic heritage and beauty of the natural and built environments. It cannot exist independently of these concerns.

GOALS

This plan presents recommendations around 14 topic areas including Bicycle, Design, Economic Development, Emergency Response, Environment, Equity, Finance, Highway, Intermodal, Land Use, Pedestrian, Planning, Safety, and Transit. Within each topic there is an overall goal, followed by objectives, policies, strategies and performance measures.

The full plan contains 41 pages of Objectives, Policies, Strategies and Performance Measures organized under these goals. The document can be found at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/transportation/recommend.pdf>.



Rhode Island Geographic Information System

The position of the RIGIS Coordinator was transferred to the Division of Information Technology in September as mandated by the Governor's Fiscal Fitness Program. It is not expected that major differences in functions or services from the RIGIS office at the Department of Administration will occur due to this organizational change. The GIS Analyst's position remains with the Statewide Planning Program.

The grant proposal for the creation of a web site supporting federal and state efforts to make GIS data more available, submitted to the USGS in June, was not awarded. However, a separate proposal submitted to the US Dept. of Agriculture by the Environmental Data Center at the University of Rhode Island was awarded to that RIGIS participating organization. The RIGIS coordinator will be working with the EDC/URI to ensure this effort will reap maximum benefits for the entire RIGIS organization.

The data set of orthophotography for the northern portion of the state from the USGS covering the major urban areas of the state was offered to the public in July. The data was projected into the RI state plane coordinate system by the EDC at URI and compressed for packaging on CD-ROM media at Statewide Planning. The CD-ROM products are being distributed out of the RIGIS Coordinator's office. A GIS data set updating the RI Senate districts to reflect changes made by the RI Redistricting Commission was completed. It will be incorporated into the RIGIS data base in the near future.

Continuing GIS analysis and mapping support was provided to the Land Use, Economic Development, and Transportation sections of Statewide Planning, and the Rhode Island Rivers Council. The land use analysis involved an extensive comparison of the 1995 RIGIS land use/land cover data set and information gleaned from city and town comprehensive plans for future land use directions in the state.

Christina Delage, the GIS Analyst at Statewide Planning, attended the Environmental Research Institute's annual conference in San Diego in August. She received a certificate of award at that prestigious conference for a map/poster display of a comparison of land use in Rhode Island that she presented. In addition, Christina attended the annual Northeast Arc Users conference held in Lake Placid, N. Y., in September. At Lake Placid, she made a presentation on her recent work on land use in Rhode Island. RIGIS represented Rhode Island at the annual National States Geographic Council conference in Austin, Texas in September.

The RIGIS coordinator supported the RI Emergency Management Agency at the Tall Ships Festival in Newport in July by coordinating the participation of GIS technical personnel from RIDOA, RIDOT and RIDOH. Support was also given to the RI Emergency Management Council in their endeavor to obtain aerial photography and computer viewing software for use by public safety organizations.

Economic Development

The Priority Project List for the 2004 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was forwarded to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in early July along with our end-of-the-fiscal-year progress report. It was also featured prominently in the CEDS *Annual Report*.

The CEDS Subcommittee, Technical Committee and State Planning Council formally approved the *Annual Report* in September. The *Annual Report* put the priority list in context with economic conditions in the state, the objectives and policies of the State Guide Plan, and goals for the program for the coming year.

Priority listing in the CEDS qualifies applicants to apply for EDA funding through the Public Works and Development Facilities grants program.

Section staff completed a draft of a technical paper providing an evaluation of nine projects funded by the EDA in the period 1996-2000. The evaluation included job generation, wages, multiplier effects (economic spinoffs), and consonance between the state's project selection process and the EDA's. Several recommendations were made for getting more projects funded, improving estimates of economic impact, and stimulating more jobs at higher wages. The paper will be presented to the Technical Committee in October.

Intergovernmental Review

49 completed in total

Review of EDC projects

7 proposals received this quarter
3 proposals pending
4 proposals completed
7 proposals acted on by staff and reviewing agencies

RI Census

The Statewide Planning Program has renewed formal agreements with the U.S. Census Bureau that originally established membership in the *Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates (FSPPE)*. The contracts include a three-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for FY2001-FY2004 and an Annual Work Plan (AWP) for FY2005.

The documents constitute an agreement between the U.S. Census Bureau and the State of Rhode Island that continue the joint project originally established in 1992.

Pursuant to the agreement, the parties will operate in accordance with procedures that define the structure of the program and delineate specific duties and responsibilities of the State and the U.S. Census Bureau.

Statewide Planning and the U.S. Census Bureau have also entered into an agreement that establishes an annual renewable contract to guaranty Statewide Planning access to the embargoed directories and secure server maintained by the Population Division of the U.S. Census Bureau.



Land Use

Land Use Plan –Preparation of Drafts, Presentations to Technical Committee

Staff has continued drafting sections of the land use plan for review with the Technical Committee. On September 10, staff made a presentation to the Technical Committee on the first two parts of the plan. These chapters contain the introduction, history and context, report of public input, vision, goals and policies. Staff has prepared parts 3 and 4 for the October 8 Technical Committee. These parts discuss economic, demographic and land use trends and future land use needs. There is also a summary of land use issues and identification of geographic areas of concern.

Comprehensive Plan Review

Staff continues to assist in administering reviews of Comprehensive Plan Updates and Affordable Housing Plans

Affordable Housing Support

Staff has researched and written technical reports to support Statewide Planning’s efforts in Affordable Housing. One major effort focused on developing a handbook on Inclusionary Zoning. This handbook, intended to assist officials developing local affordable housing plans, should be posted to the agency’s website in October.

Committee Actions

STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

The Council met in August and September. They approved two amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program and approved scoring criteria for the update of the TIP. They also adopted the update to the ground transportation element of the State Guide Plan: Transportation 2025. The council also approved the Annual Report on Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for submission to the Economic Development Administration.

The Council also received a report on legislation amending the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act and a number of other related statutes had been passed by the General Assembly. A number of major changes to planning responsibilities of Statewide Planning, RI Housing, the RI Housing Resources Commission and local municipalities are provided for in the legislation. Chief among those changes impact municipalities that have not achieved a ten percent threshold of low and moderate income housing must now submit affordable housing plans to Statewide Planning by December 31, 2004. Statewide Planning must review those plans by July 1, 2005, the same date that the moratorium on the filing of applications by private developers under the comprehensive permit process expires. The RI Housing Resources Commission and Statewide Planning must prepare a state 5 year strategic housing production plan that includes guidelines for higher density development at the local level. This plan is to be adopted by the State Planning Council by July 1, 2006. Communities without state approved affordable housing plans will have 1 year to amend their local comprehensive plans to bring them into compliance with the state plan. The legislation also changed the membership of the State Planning Council in anticipation of separation of powers.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Committee met in August and September. They reviewed the draft of the update of the Ground Transportation Plan and recommended it to the State Planning Council. The Committee reviewed a detailed outline to the update of the Land Use Policies and Plan as well as the first two parts of the plan; the introduction and the vision for future land use. The Committee also recommended acceptance of the Annual Report on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to the State Planning Council.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** met in July, August and September. The TAC took the following actions:

- The TAC held a Public Hearing in July on the draft Transportation Plan, Transportation 2025. The TAC recommended the draft Plan with specific changes to the State Planning Council for approval as Element 611 of the State Guide Plan.
- The TAC recommended that the State Planning Council repeal State Guide Plan Elements 620 and 691.
- The TAC held a Public Hearing in August on Amendment #10 to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This amendment related to the Transit Program, specifically commuter rail as well as the Freight Rail Improvement Program (FRIP). The TAC recommended that the State Planning Council approve the Amendment.
- The TAC approved the suggested changes to the Transportation Improvement Program Project Evaluation Criteria.
- The TAC held a public comment session on Amendment #11 to the TIP. This amendment related to an addition to the Enhancement Program.

Transportation

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FY 03-05 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) – AMENDMENTS

- Following a public hearing on June 24 by the TAC, the State Planning Council approved Amendment #7 on August 12, 2004. This allocates previously unprogrammed funds within the Congestion Mitigation / Air Quality (CMAQ) Program for FFY 2005. Please see <http://www.planning.ri.gov/tip/web7.pdf> for details.

- Following a public hearing on August 26 by the TAC, the State Planning Council approved Amendment #10 on September 16, 2004. This amendment affects the commuter rail and freight rail projects in the following programs: Administration, Bridge, Major Projects, Transit.
- Amendment # 11 was approved by the Transportation Advisory Committee on September 23, 2004. As this was a minor amendment, no public hearing was required. The amendment adds one project to the Enhancement Program.

FY 06-07 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

The Transportation Advisory Committee and the State Planning Council Criteria approved revisions to the criteria used to evaluate project proposals for the Transportation Improvement Program, beginning in FY 2006. A new category on “Safety, Security, and Technology” was added, and the point scale was modified. This does not change evaluation criteria for Enhancement and CMAQ projects.



Comprehensive Plans

The initial quarter of the State's FY 2005 was a positive one for the Comprehensive Plans Section as a total of five municipalities - Cumberland, Lincoln, Middletown, Newport, and Scituate - had the Five-Year Updates to their respective Comprehensive Plans approved. The Town of Burrillville had its Affordable Housing Plan approved as comprehensive plan amendment BUR 04-1.

Upon the closing of the initial State agency review, Letters of Deficiency from Director of Administration Beverly Najarian were forwarded to the communities of East Providence, Foster, Narragansett, and South Kingstown regarding their Five-Year Updates; State reviews were also forwarded to: East Greenwich concerning revisions to its Five-Year Update; Pawtucket concerning revisions to its Five-Year Update, Richmond concerning revisions to its initial Comprehensive Plan; Smithfield concerning revisions to its Affordable Housing Plan (SMI 04-1); and West Warwick concerning revisions to its initial Comprehensive Plan.

Received and currently under State review are: the Town of Burrillville's Five-Year Update to its Comprehensive Plan; an amendment to the Town of Charlestown's Comprehensive Plan (CHA 04-1); and the Town of Narragansett's response to the Letter of Deficiency regarding its Five-Year Update.

Together with officials from Rhode Island Housing, a series of meetings were held with officials from Portsmouth, South Kingstown, and Warren and their respective consultants concerning the preparation of each community's affordable housing plan. A meeting was also held with officials from West Warwick and their consultant to discuss the most efficient and effective approach in dealing with potential comprehensive planning and zoning issues from the "anticipated" Narragansett Indian Tribe casino.

The Statewide Planning Program was one of ten cooperating agencies and organizations involved in the preparation and presentation of the workshop "What Municipalities Need to Know About the 2004 RI Housing Act and Affordable Housing Plans" sponsored by The Rhode Island Foundation and United Way of Rhode Island. The workshop was offered at three locations around the State and was designed to 1) help communities immediately affected by the 2004 Housing Act understand the impacts of the new legislation; 2) offer local officials, staff, and their consultants the information and guidance they need to develop concise, defensible, and pro-active affordable housing plans; and 3) provide resources to help officials inform their communities and respond to citizen questions about the legislation and the required affordable housing plans.

The Comprehensive Plans Section represented the Statewide Planning Program at meetings of the Urban Land Reform Advisory Committee sponsored by the City of Providence and The Providence Plan. The Committee's aims are to assist the City of Providence in 1) developing indicators of property abandonment based on available datasets; 2) clarifying the City's tax sale procedures so that they are more readily understandable by those households impacted; and 3) maximizing tax sale revenue generating potential and/or enhancing the opportunity for neighborhood revitalization.

Staff of the Comprehensive Plans Section has been designated as Rhode Island's "resource person" for the series of sessions that comprise the "Next Communities Initiative" training program. The five sessions that make up the program focus on solutions to sprawl, the legal and political framework for effecting change at the local level, and dealing with the conflict that can arise from change and collaboration within a community. The Program is sponsored by The New England Environmental Finance Center, the University of Southern Maine, GrowSmart RI, and Leadership Blackstone Valley.